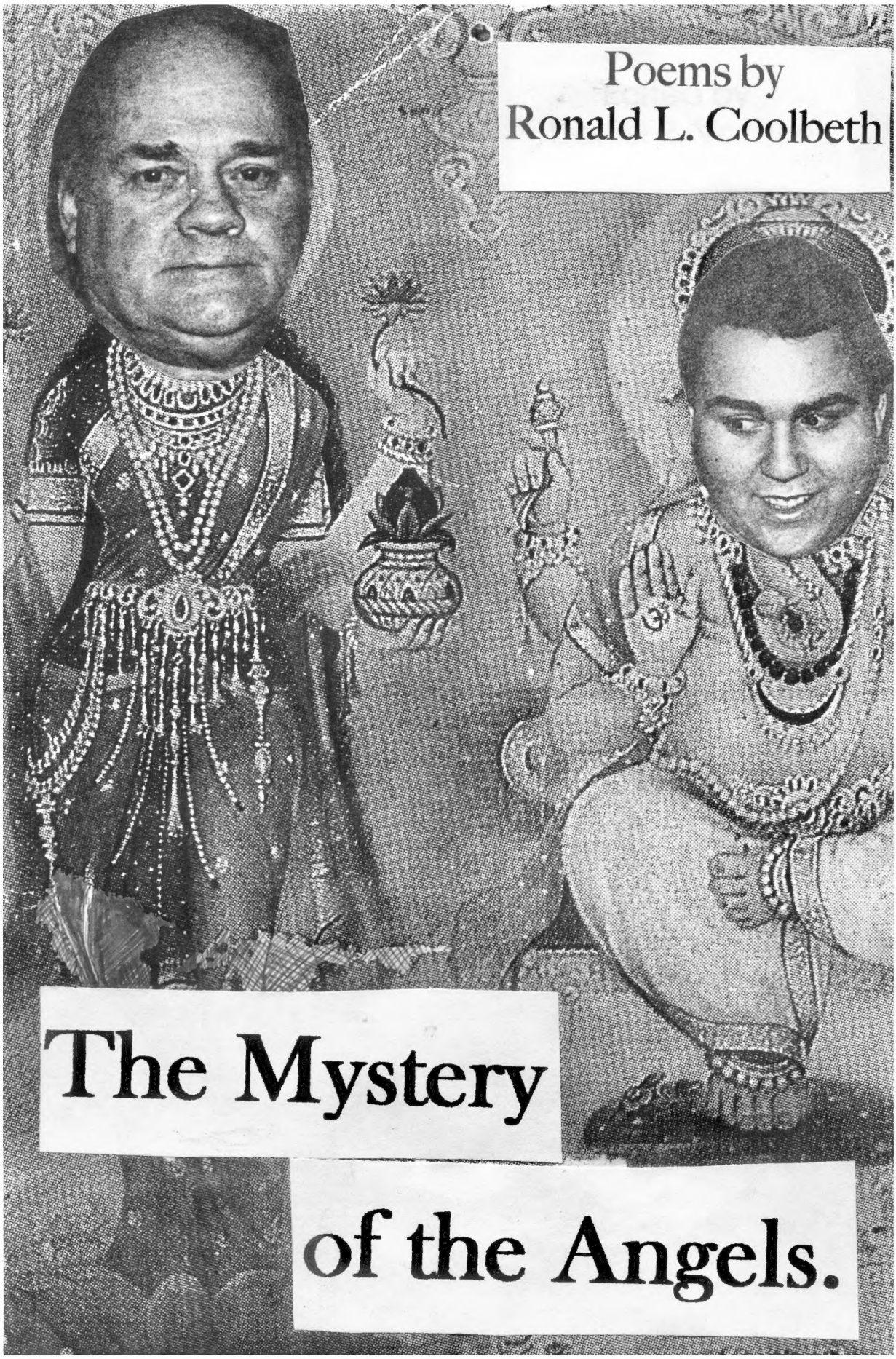
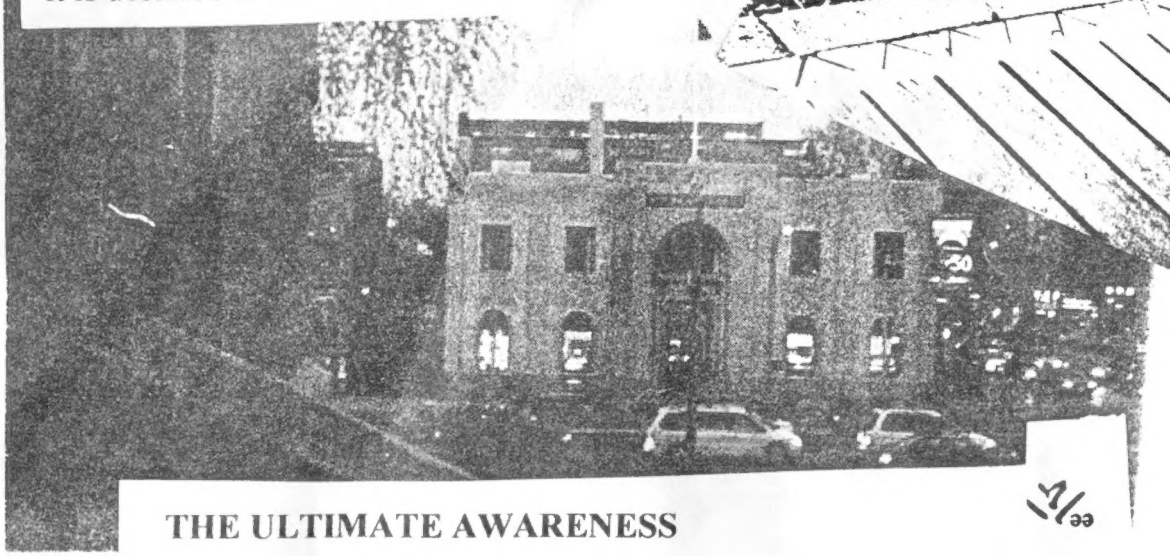

Poems by
Ronald L. Coolbeth
The Mystery
of the Angels.

THE CITY

The Wind is a switchblade knife
Slashing at the smokestacks of urban insanity
While man the timeless predator stalks his prey relentlessly
Across the jungle metropolis
A lashing rain pounded down hour after hour
Flooding the endless gutters to overflowing following
Its natural path to the sea.
Somewhere in the distance a flashing neon sign hissed
Little puffs of smoke danced as the cold rain beat against it.
"Jesus Saves," it read "Hot Food & Bed Inside."
The mission beckoned like a lighthouse at sea.
It drew the homeless and downtrodden
The mission's sign signified a safe place
from these perilous streets
As for this lonely night,
It is destined to be no more.



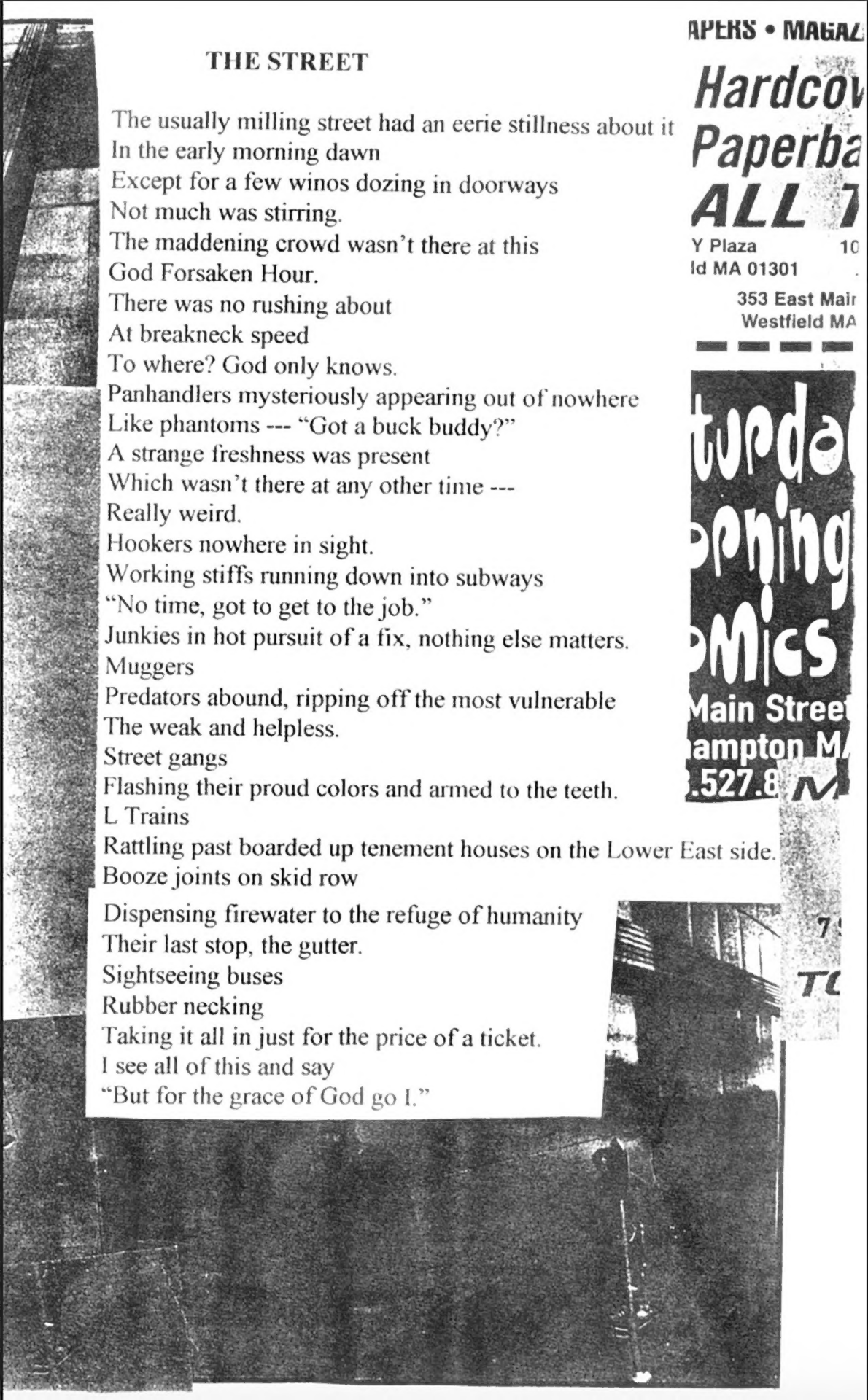
THE ULTIMATE AWARENESS

什 證 死 我 是

The incredible sensation begins behind my mind's eye
Then it moves very slowly upward
Finally bursting forth into the glaring light of day
Bringing with it such a turbulence of thought
Which transcends all my other senses
My usual knee jerk mentality is being superseded by a much
Greater and deeper subliminal surge of awareness.
My cerebral consciousness has heightened to the max.
I awake to the true realm of existence;
The meaning of life on this earthly mortal plane.
Thus realizing that without true love
There is no real existence,
At least none worth living.

THE STREET

The usually milling street had an eerie stillness about it
In the early morning dawn
Except for a few winos dozing in doorways
Not much was stirring.
The maddening crowd wasn't there at this
God Forsaken Hour.
There was no rushing about
At breakneck speed
To where? God only knows.
Panhandlers mysteriously appearing out of nowhere
Like phantoms --- "Got a buck buddy?"
A strange freshness was present
Which wasn't there at any other time ---
Really weird.
Hookers nowhere in sight.
Working stiffs running down into subways
"No time, got to get to the job."
Junkies in hot pursuit of a fix, nothing else matters.
Muggers
Predators abound, ripping off the most vulnerable
The weak and helpless.
Street gangs
Flashing their proud colors and armed to the teeth.
L Trains
Rattling past boarded up tenement houses on the Lower East side.
Booze joints on skid row
Dispensing firewater to the refuge of humanity
Their last stop, the gutter.
Sightseeing buses
Rubber necking
Taking it all in just for the price of a ticket.
I see all of this and say
"But for the grace of God go I."



THE HOBO

He rode the rods under thousands of trains
Trains headed East or West
It didn't matter where.
Hop a freight headed North or South,
Just don't make no difference where.
Got a meal for a little work lady?
Say buddy can you spare a dime?
The unmistakable smell of Mulligan Stew cooking
Seems like I've been on the go forever
It just goes to show you.
I've been wandering from Canada
To the Golden Gate Bridge
Salt Lake City
To the "big sky" country of Montana
But what's over that next hill?
Wherever you go it is all the same
No point in useless sighs or jaded illusions.
The thirties were a tough time for 'bos
The Great Depression, you know.
No jobs to be had pal
You just couldn't buy a job
For love of money.
When you got where you were going,
You just turned around and headed back again.
At the drop of a hat or the call of a train whistle,
That's about all it took
To hit the dusty trail.
There were some good times too;
Like the camaraderie
That existed in the hobo jungle across America,
It seemed like the journey would go on forever. . .

Satori

I have heard my brethren's low steady cry--
But I heeded them not!
I have heard the mournful sobbing of
children; coming out of the black ghettos---
But I heeded them not!
I have heard the red man shouting in rage;
from his exiled patch of land----
But I heeded him not!
I saw the homeless, sleeping under bridges;
their faces pressed with hopelessness----
But I heeded them not!

And I have also seen the quite mad; driven
by their "voices" to wander the streets aimlessly---
But I heeded them not!
Until finally it came to me that their plight was mine;
Their life was my life,
We are all at one with creation;
This is the Zen of it----
I now heed them: yes!
When asked, "How did you arrive at the awareness?"
I answer, "It is the Great Satori!"
For there is nothing else.

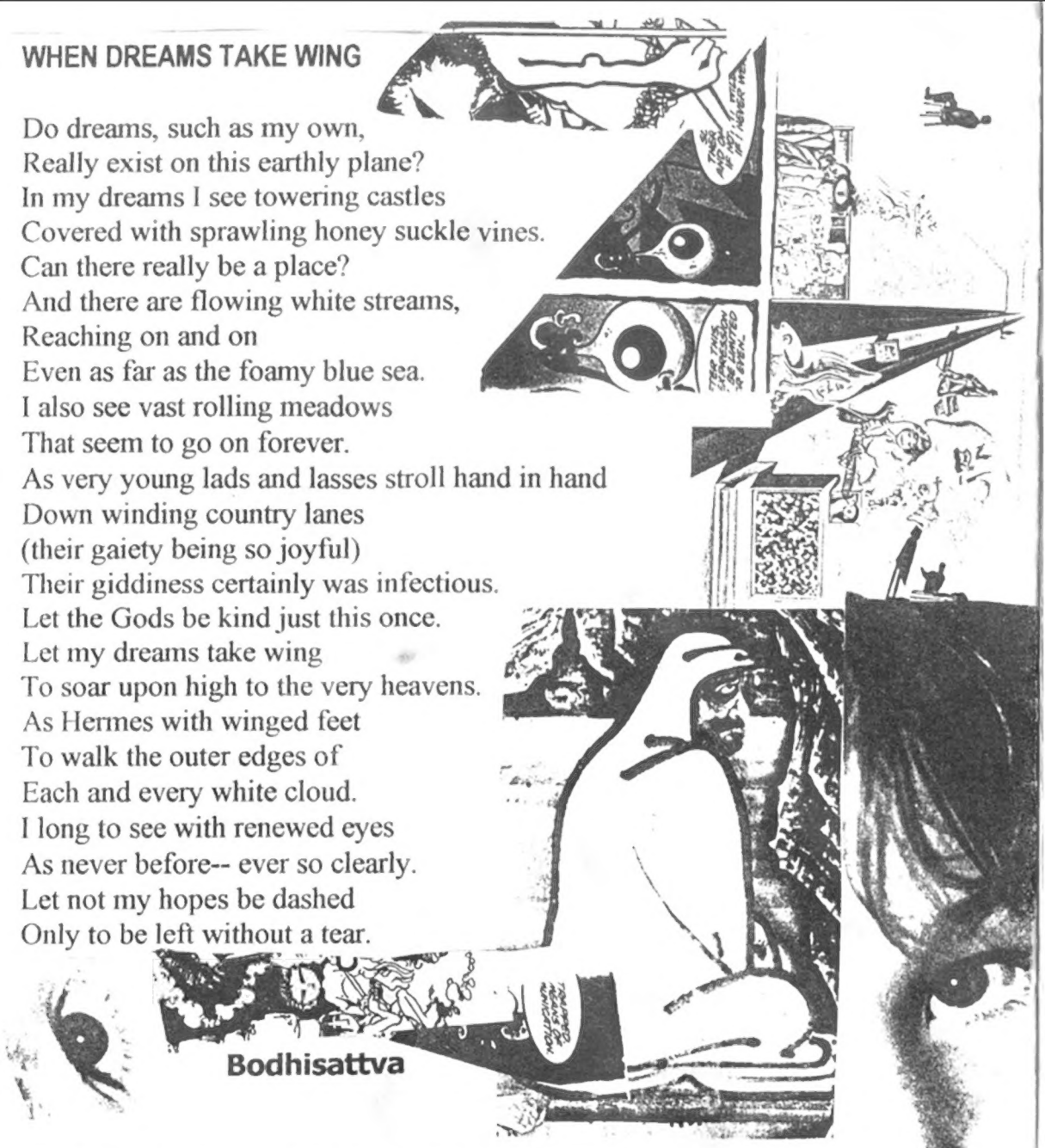
The Nightly Specter

There's a constant presence
it surrounds my whole being
which I can't identify, yet it's everywhere
I don't know why, but it has no name
yet being all consuming
filling every space
it exists in and of itself
but never coming into view
never to show its face
perhaps I truly know
that it's really an inner feeling
that need be true, this inner feeling
that certainly must exist
than I say let it remain nameless

for it doesn't matter to me
this specter which slips in and out
under the darkness of a black night
this nameless specter, that exist
just out of sight
which is hell bent to be.

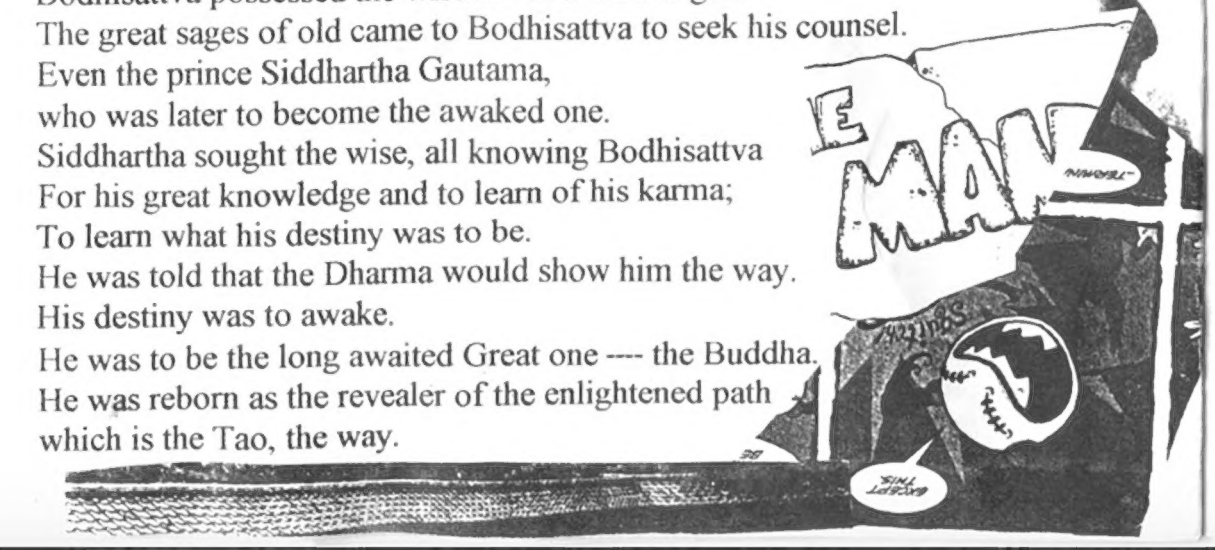
WHEN DREAMS TAKE WING

Do dreams, such as my own,
Really exist on this earthly plane?
In my dreams I see towering castles
Covered with sprawling honey suckle vines.
Can there really be a place?
And there are flowing white streams,
Reaching on and on
Even as far as the foamy blue sea.
I also see vast rolling meadows
That seem to go on forever.
As very young lads and lasses stroll hand in hand
Down winding country lanes
(their gaiety being so joyful)
Their giddiness certainly was infectious.
Let the Gods be kind just this once.
Let my dreams take wing
To soar upon high to the very heavens.
As Hermes with winged feet
To walk the outer edges of
Each and every white cloud.
I long to see with renewed eyes
As never before-- ever so clearly.
Let not my hopes be dashed
Only to be left without a tear.



Bodhisattva

Bodhisattva possessed the wisdom of a wise angel.
The great sages of old came to Bodhisattva to seek his counsel.
Even the prince Siddhartha Gautama,
who was later to become the awaked one.
Siddhartha sought the wise, all knowing Bodhisattva
For his great knowledge and to learn of his karma;
To learn what his destiny was to be.
He was told that the Dharma would show him the way.
His destiny was to awake.
He was to be the long awaited Great one ---- the Buddha.
He was reborn as the revealer of the enlightened path
which is the Tao, the way.



FINDING THE WAY BACK

4.16

Finding the way back
Push fear aside
Climb out of the abyss and press on
Today I won't obsess
Attitude is just a mind set
For God's sake, don't isolate
You know how you vegetate
Time Out!
Everyday, in every way, I'm better
One Day At A Time
Take my "meds"
Is it inappropriate behavior?
Death has no power over me
As this angel has not so far passed over
Am I truly my brother's keeper?
Now I'm really hooked on Hope
The human spirit being as resilient as it is
Really astounds me
I'm not totally earthbound
As I definitely possess a great sense of the whimsical
Is remembrance good?
Can any good come of it?
What about forgiveness
Is it possible?
Am I at Ground Zero?
What level am I on now?
The Center doesn't seem to hold.
Is this the way back?
Perhaps we can walk together.

Heavenly Hosts

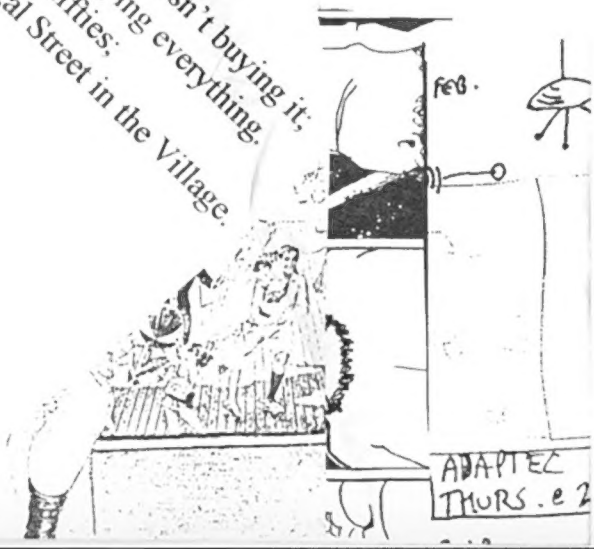
Celestial spirits
passing to and fro
through time & space
hovering
continuously moving
entering and exiting.
Our earthly sphere;
gargoyles at the ready
ever poised.
Cherubs seen at every turn
there to welcome these angelic beings;
ascending and descending in the air
going about their assignment
carrying out their mission
Divine interventions
which transcends all our natural senses
I show to you a mystery;
the mystery of the angels.

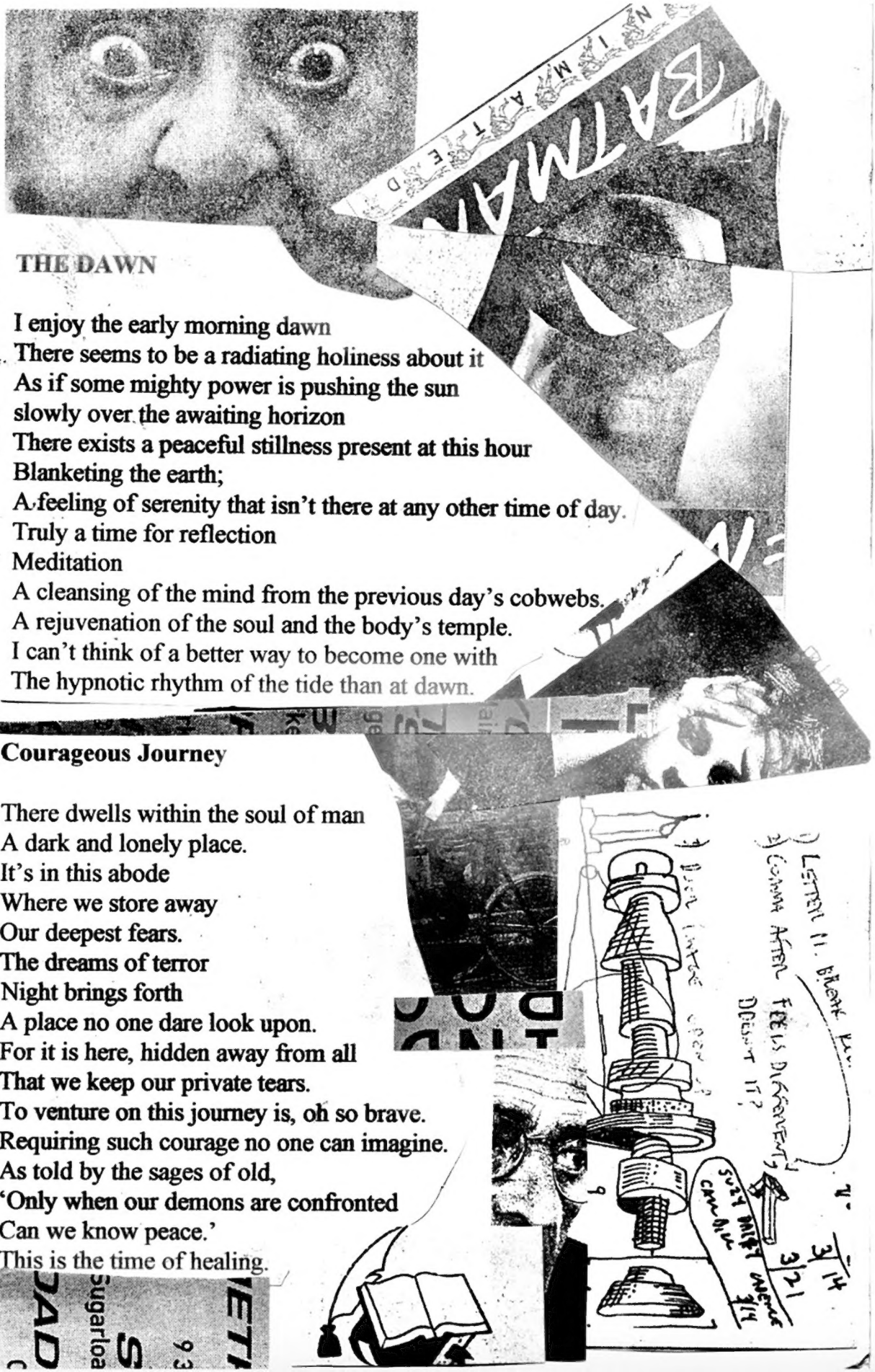
Truth

Sweet fragrance of scent,
lifting higher and higher
as to soar the very heavens.
Roaming country roads, meditating on long
past joys, bringing into present being
wishful meaning --- as meaning must be.
Flower buds---emerging in pure birth, each scent
blending---always blending as one, to form
the universal sea of truth.
Thoughts flow forth as fleeting galaxy stars---
Madness, activity of dreams without order or reason.
Searching---searching---truth elusive as mercury,
changing--- constantly changing as earth's season.
Reality as truth incompatibly distant;
The Search goes on.

Dharma And Sacred Cows

The time is three in the morning,
And sleep just won't come.
My soul is aching to speak,
The little voice inside refuses to be denied;
It certainly will have its say.
I'm feeling as though being caught
in some weird time warp.
Lonely isolation at this ungodly hour;
My mind races.
Thoughts keep coming, flying
Like gushing rivers,
Out of the past and into the present
With all its force.
Somehow hoping this is dadaism
Signifying nothing, but my heart isn't buying it;
I know it's all very real, signifying everything.
Reminiscences of the early fifties;
he wee hours on McDoogal Street in the Village.
Coffee Houses.
Poetry Readings.
The Bitter End Cafe.
Hydrogen Bombs.
Fear, Desolation.
Dharma and Sacred Cows.
Finally thoughts of hope;
Manifesting itself in my being,
Transcending all else.
Leaving me feeling like a Renaissance man,
But sounding more like a Beat poet.





THE DAWN

I enjoy the early morning dawn
There seems to be a radiating holiness about it
As if some mighty power is pushing the sun
slowly over the awaiting horizon
There exists a peaceful stillness present at this hour
Blanketing the earth;
A feeling of serenity that isn't there at any other time of day.
Truly a time for reflection
Meditation
A cleansing of the mind from the previous day's cobwebs.
A rejuvenation of the soul and the body's temple.
I can't think of a better way to become one with
The hypnotic rhythm of the tide than at dawn.

Courageous Journey

There dwells within the soul of man
A dark and lonely place.
It's in this abode
Where we store away
Our deepest fears.
The dreams of terror
Night brings forth
A place no one dare look upon.
For it is here, hidden away from all
That we keep our private tears.
To venture on this journey is, oh so brave.
Requiring such courage no one can imagine.
As told by the sages of old,
'Only when our demons are confronted
Can we know peace.'
This is the time of healing.